commissioned distributors/unviable distributors, etc., It is, therefore, not possible to indicate a definite time frame for release of connections to the waitlisted persons. However, with the expected higher availability of LPG through imports, more connections are planned to be released and it is expected to clear the entire waiting list by the year 2000-1, throughout the country.

The Oil Companies have taken steps to augment LPG production from indigenous sources and maximise LPG imports through existing facilities at Mumbai, Vizag, Kandla and Mangalore. Action has also been taken to augment LPG bottling capacity, LPG movement capacity procurement of LPG equipment etc., and expanding retail network for meeting the demand of existing and the new customers.

IOC's LPG Bottling plants in A.P.

2772. SHRI YERRA NARAYANA-SWAMY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indian Oil Corporation's LPG bottling plants functioning in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) whether Indian Oil Corporation plan to open more such plants in the State; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to meet LPG demand in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) One LPG bottling plant of IOC at Vijaywada with a capacity of 22 TMTPA is currently operating in the State of Andhra Pradesh.

(b) Indian Oil Corporation proposes to set up two new bottling plants under the VIII Plan in the following locations in Andhra Pradesh:

Location	*Capacity (TMTPA)*
Cuddapah	44
Secunderabad/Hyderabad (Cherlapally)	26

(c) Efforts are constantly on to release LPG connections to applicants as early as possible. Plants have been drawn for higher availability of LPG by increasing the capacity of existing production sources, putting up new plants and higher imports through existing and new facilities.

Price Increase of Natural Gas

2773. SHRI N. GIRI PRASAD:
DR. MOHAN BABU:
DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what has been the price of natural gas in the country, year-wise from 1990, till date, and whether the figures compare with those in Italy, Germany, France, Thailand, Korea and Japan; and

(b) the annual rate of increase in the prices of natural gas since 1990 and whether the figures compare with the price increase of LPG, HSD, Petrol, during the same period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) the consumer price of gas, yearwise since 1990 is shown in the Table below:

	Rs./MMC
1990	1400
1991	1400
1992	1550
1993	1650
1994	1750
1995	1850
1996	1850
1997	1850